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C O N F I D E N T I A L KIGALI 000217

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PRM FOR DAS FITZGERALD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/13/2016

TAGS: PREL PREF RW

SUBJECT: RWANDA: REPEAL OF ARMS NOTIFICATION, CHILD
SOLDIERS

REF: USUN NEW YORK 0159

Classified By: Ambassador Michael R. Arietti, reason 1.4 (B/D)

¶1. (C) Foreign Minister Charles Murigande requested Ambassador Arietti meet with him on March 2. In his office, Murigande sought U.S. support for repeal of the notification provision of UNSC resolution 1011 of 1995, which lifted the arms embargo on Rwanda, but left in place a notification provision for arms or material shipments to the country. A reference to this notification requirement occurred in March 2006, in regard to a potential violation by Bulgaria. A Security Council Sanctions Committee press release in 1996 stated that notifications were no longer required, but this apparently has no legal effect, and the notification provision remains technically in force.

¶2. (C) This request comes as a follow-up to the approach made by the Rwandan delegation in New York (reftel). Murigande made many of the same points, emphasizing Rwanda's present status as a "normal, responsible member" of the international community, one which directly contributes to African and international peace and stability through its participation in peace-keeping exercises in Sudan, Haiti, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and the Comoros. Murigande also suggested repeatedly that attempts to "revive" the notification provision were the work of the French government. The French had no particular interest in furthering peace in the Great Lakes by use of this notification process, he suggested; following the rupture in relations between the two states last November, France simply hoped to make life difficult for Rwanda in any way it could.

¶3. (C) Ambassador took the opportunity to mention reports of the recruiting of Congolese in Rwanda to serve with General Nkunda in North Kivu. (Note: This mission has spoken with both UNHCR and MONUC here in Kigali, and both are concerned by and are investigating these reports, particularly one recent alleged incident involving two teenage "recruits" who supposedly managed to escape from Nkunda's recruiters and reach safety with MONUC in the DRC). Murigande forcefully denied any GOR involvement in such alleged incidents, noting that it was against Rwanda's interests to seek to destabilize the nascent attempts to incorporate Nkunda's troops in regular FARDC units. He further noted that the Congolese refugee camps were open, freely entered and exited, and filled with people who regularly crossed the border to and from the DRC for all sorts of mundane family and business reasons. Analyzing why they came and went was "very

difficult," he said. They had many motivations for traveling, and they traveled easily. Further, he said, "they don't need to be recruited -- many of them are already Nkunda's people." He then repeated several times that the GOR did not condone any recruitment, particularly of child soldiers, did not facilitate it, and put a stop to it when it found it. "This is not something that does us any good, and we don't like it," he said.

¶4. (C) Murigande also mentioned that the GOR has long favored efforts to close the camps housing approximately 40,000 mainly Tutsi Congolese. The GOR is willing to consider resettling the Congolese in Rwanda or to facilitate their return to the Congo should they wish to do so, given recent developments in the DRC. He lamented that UNHCR and others have not supported these options.

¶5. (C) Comment. This mission endorses the GOR request to repeal the notification request for arms shipments to Rwanda.

This is a sovereign government, meeting its responsibilities regionally, while greatly assisting both USG national interests and the interests of the African Union, the United Nations and the international community as a whole in its peacekeeping missions. The notification requirement has not been used, noticed or missed for over ten years -- time now to give it a decent burial. On reports of the recruiting of fighters by Nkunda from Rwanda, Foreign Minister Murigande rightly says that Rwanda has no interest in upsetting a peace-making process (Nkunda's reintegration) that it helped arrange in the first place. End comment.

ARIETTI